



Parsley

Regarding parsley, investigation remains. I am unsure whether my recent habit of a high daily dose has to do with bad breath, the sanctity of the body, or a dying mother's hand. For now, just ingest. Parsley benefits *ad infinitum*.
(words and art by Patricia Kirkpatrick)



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Worcester Bombs at Poetry
The verb to *bomb* is double-edged, a verbal quality exploited by poets from the beginning of time. Bronze Age youth who could not hunt were forced to harness their linguistic powers to avoid being devoured. Proclaiming verses to a jaded crowd of adolescent peers, desperately trying to convince them that words have power, alternately shaking with tears and bellowing with bravado, is an ancient tradition, carried on in Slam Poetry. And Worcester's youth excelled at all of these things this April, taking home the trophy at the inaugural Massachusetts Louder Than A Bomb youth poetry slam. Poems from the team included anti-capitalist rants, father poems, and tributes to the late Lizzie Borden and Mrs. Adolf Hitler. The group piece, a poem with four poets interweaving their voices, was a biting critique of the portrayal of women in Disney's films. (Asa Needle)

Fruit of Ages
Zackary Sholem Berger

I scramble through
branches, catching
brambles
To find the fruit of
ages—
Modest and gleaming
From a dangling branch:
Rotten to the core
Teeming with flies
Glorious, radiant.

Don't Call Me a Methodist

First of all, it's not factually accurate. Secondly, the word used to be an insult and stands as one of the few examples of a people truly coöpting a term once used against them. It joins *Quaker* as a word whose original meaning has been forgotten. Semi-successful were *yankee*, *punk*, and *queer*. The fight over the significance of words in our culture is not mere semantics, it is at the heart of how we, literally, define ourselves. (Asa Needle)

Buzz Buttons

The buzz button (*Acmella oleracea*) is a small plant you can grow in your yard. If you pluck and chew the yellow flower head, it will taste slightly bitter and slightly sour for a few seconds. Then your mouth will explode with pleasant sensations of carbonation and electricity. You will worry that the sensations are becoming unpleasant, just before your mouth floods with saliva. Will you swallow the saliva, convinced that it has its own tangy flavor, or will you spit as you have never spit before? Chemicals in the bud, primary among them the analgesic fatty acid *amide spilanthol*, will continue to work their magic, whatever you choose. (Mike Benedetti)

Knuckleball

While most pitchers are about speed and power, the knuckleballer's pitch drifts to the plate twenty miles an hours slower than average. It is the Trickster of pitches.

Normally a ball spins when thrown, the spin adding speed and stability. The knuckleball has almost no rotation. Drag and drafts cause it to dance and flutter to the plate. A masterful knuckleball darts around the bat.

But few have mastered it. Being a knuckleball pitcher is about dedicating yourself to a weird backwater of the sport, trying to reinvent yourself to make your dream happen anyway. The only current knuckleballer in the majors, R.A. Dickey, thought he lost his shot at the beginning of his pro career, when team doctors discovered he was missing a ligament in his arm. But you don't need all your ligaments to throw a knuckleball.

Aspiring knuckleballer, you must give up your perfectionist streak. If the wind is blowing a certain way, your opponent will hit the ball out of the park. Sticky with humidity, your catcher will chase your errant tosses. But on the right summer night, if you work with the weather, the knuckleball will bring you the big win. (Jen Burt)

NALCREST

The National Association of Letter Carriers union operates the township of Nalcrest, Florida, a retirement community open only to retired union members. The name is an acronym of National Association of Letter Carriers Retirement, Education, Security and Training.

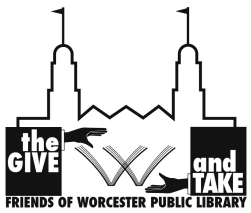
Dogs are not allowed, and there is no home mail delivery.

The Mysterious Island

Often in fiction, when a group is stranded on a deserted island things go badly. Whether the *Lord of the Flies* or *LOST*, nobody will find any redemption without both tears and blood being shed.

Let us consider the reaction of the four men, one boy, and one dog who crash-land on Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*. Do they say, "This is a great opportunity to illustrate the breakdown of the social order?" Do they say, "This is a great opportunity to illustrate the breakdown of the individual psyche?" No, they rather say, "This is a great opportunity to smelt some iron and build a telegraph under primitive conditions, pausing only to adopt an orangutan."

The next time you feel a breakdown coming, ask yourself if this is an opportunity to suffer, or one for adventure. (Mike Benedetti)



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Not In The Same Breath by Zackary Sholem Berger: 1/3 Yiddish, 1/3 English, 2/3 Pretty Pictures. bit.ly/NITSBAmazon

Cat In The Hat and Curious George in Yiddish. yiddishcat.com



POCKET DOORBELL
It is in the Apple App Store and will make your phone a contemporary doorbell. CNET called it "Dumb, yes, but kind of cool, too."



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שלום בערגער

איך ראנגל זיך מונטער מיט געצויג
און דערע אין געשוויג
אַ פֿרייעוועל
אַראָפּהענגענדיק שטיל-גן'עדיניק
לעבן באַמבלעדיקן בוימבלאַט.
פֿאַרפֿילט ביזן האַרצן
פֿאַרשווימלט מיט פֿליגן
גלאַנציק, אַ פֿראַכט.



The beards of Worcester were on parade this March at Whiskerite, the city’s premiere charity beard competition, held at the Hotel Vernon. The Uncle Jesse Award for fullness, length, and texture was split between Mike Szymczak and John Jacques. The Edward Scissor Face Award for creativity, originality, and impressiveness was split between Sam Bonacci and Jay Thomas. The Road Kill Grill Award for patchiness, inconsistency, and color was given to Jeremy Shulkin. The ZZ Tops! Award for best-of-show was split between Ron and Brian (both of these men entered the contest spontaneously and their last names are unknown). Pete Mascitelli was the Fan Favorite. More than \$1000 was raised for the Worcester County Food Bank through admission fees and fundraising work by the contestants at the bar; the judges additionally donated all bribes received. Pictured: Sam Bonacci’s beard supports numerous items in a test of beard strength. Photo by Louie Despres.



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Social Service Programs & Their Neighbors

BY DAVE MCMAHON

Is it true, as some assume, that the crime in the city is caused by homeless people living in the programs of Worcester, and that these programs de-grade their neighborhoods?

Whenever a location is selected for a new program, there is an initial spike of outcry about rising crime rates, falling property rates, and whether a program “fits” the culture of a neighborhood. This outcry then vanishes from the papers and recedes from memory, accumulating only as a collective sense that social service programs are a problem for their neighbors.

We want to find out what neighbors really think after the fuss is over. For the past few months, members of the Worcester Homeless Action Committee have surveyed the residents of neighborhoods where social service programs have been sited in the past five years.

In 2007, Worcester’s “Mending Fences” report surveyed attitudes in a triangular neighborhood south of Clark University, bounded by Main, Cambridge, and Crystal. The report found that residents were supportive of the programs in this neighborhood. Working with Dr. Corey Dolgon, lead author of “Mending Fences,” we are now assessing larger areas of the city.

The new report is not yet done, but it’s already clear that even the abutters of social service programs generally support them, and that the programs have had no negative impact on their neighborhoods. This is important information as we consider what kind of city we want Worcester to be.

Dave McMahon is Co-Executive Director of Dismas House, a Worcester-based social service program helping ex-prisoners to re-enter society.

“Mending Fences” in a Nutshell
Property values: Between 2000 and 2006, the average property values in the neighborhood studied rose 58% to 70%. Property values in Worcester overall rose 60% to 80%.
Crime: In the neighborhood, fewer than ¼ of 1% of arrests were of residents of supportive housing.
Neighborhood attitudes: 78% of the people in the neighborhood said they would “support” or “strongly support” “any type of group home in my neighborhood.” A hard-core 16% “would rather see a house in the neighborhood vacant and abandoned than a group home put there.”
More on the “Mending Fences” report: <http://www.pieandcoffee.org/2006/10/02/report/>

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